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# "Mr. Hughes, I presume," said agent James Bond

By LYNNE McTAGGART

LONDON—AT this point, the situation is critical. It involves a reclusive shipping magnate, a supertanker that sails with no apparent destination and a nuclear submarine that has disappeared somehow. It involves the Soviets; it involves the Americans; it requires a cover operation and millions in covert funding and the highest echelon of the intelligence community. Success would mean the greatest intelligence-gathering feat of all time. Failure would mean World War III. It is a tall order, a job that calls for discretion and experience and cunning, a job for someone dependable, a job for only one of two men: James Bond, 007, or Howard R. Hughes.

Actually, it is a job involving both. The scenario is a sketch of Bond movie No. 10, "The Spy Who Loved Me," starring Roger Moore, to be released by United Artists in early summer. It is also the outline of a real-life Hughes "mission," as his business ventures usually were termed — missions that amassed the late billionaire the largest pool of industrial wealth under absolute individual control. And it is appropriate that the latest Bond epic should be patterned after the scheme of a man whose daily routine resembled a third-rate whodunit; who was given, in his financial transactions, to vacant-lot dealings by flashlight; who treated a date with a starlet like a "77 Sunset Strip" caper — a man, in short, after Bond's own heart.

The person responsible for bringing Bond and Hughes together is "Spy" producer Albert (Cubby) Broccoli, a heavy, jowled 60-ish man who has come as close to knowing the two men as anyone could. Broccoli, with former co-producer Harry Saltzman, was behind bringing the late Ian Fleming's Bond books to the screen, and he knew Hughes since the early 30s. Sitting in a director's chair surrounded by technicians and one of "Spy's" elaborate interior sets, Broccoli discussed his friendship with Hughes and the effect that he and Bond have had on each other.

The screenplay of "Spy," which does not resemble the original Fleming novel, is loosely patterned after a Hughes project involving the Glomar Explorer, an enormous deep-sea vessel built by Hughes, according to public statements, to mine the ocean bottom off the coast of Hawaii for mineral deposits.

In fact, the mining story was a cover; the real mission of Glomar, a \$500 million CIA-subsidized project (called "Jennifer"), was to retrieve a sunken Soviet nuclear submarine communication.

Jennifer, which recovered only portions of the sub, was considered the closest kept secret under the Nixon and Ford administrations until news reports leaked in 1975; if successful, CIA spokesmen had said at the time it would have been the largest single intelligence coup in history.

"I knew about Glomar before it became public," said Broccoli, and he offered as proof the writing of the "spy" script, which was begun before the news stories of Glomar broke. "I knew that Glomar was not just for mining, as the public story went. I knew about it as an undercover operation, that it was over and beyond the Hughes story of mining under the surface. It was intimated to me that it was extraordinary; that it was involved, not exactly in espionage, but in a much more complex manner under the sea; that Hughes intended to get a submarine.

"That gave me an idea about submarines. It was the kind of thing that belongs in a Bond movie."

It was necessary to write an original screenplay for "Spy," says Broccoli, the first Bond movie to depart completely from the Fleming novel, because Fleming's story-line seemed untenable for a motion picture: It had a first-person female narrator and Fleming waited until page 90 for Bond to appear.

Broccoli's association with Hughes began during Hughes' most public days — in Hollywood around 1932 while he was filming "Hell's Angels," the World War I movie classic. "We saw each other in the Colony Club a couple of times, and we became good friends. Hughes was the one who got me started in films. We called him 'Sam.' That was just his nickname."

To be "good friends" with Hughes in later years was to do little more than send and respond to third-hand messages; in seven years Hughes reportedly emerged from a one-room hideout in only two instances: To buy up Las Vegas and to denounce as fraudulent Clifford Irving's supposedly authorized "autobiography."

"When Hughes was staying at the Inn of the Park (a swank London hotel, in which Hughes had established himself in an entire floor), I'd get messages from him that he'd like to see such and such a film, and I'd get it for him. I'd do such a thing. Now, mind you, it was a nine-iron shot from my office to the hotel, but I never saw him there personally."

Nevertheless, one of Hughes' "messages" was to offer Broccoli carte blanche to any of the Hughes properties, including a large ranch, for the filming of "Diamonds Are Forever": Hughes, said Broccoli, liked James Bond.

Broccoli, who speaks passionately about his former friend and considers him a great American patriot (although he doesn't say why), believes the character of 007 and the plots of all the Bond movies have been affected by his knowledge of the Hughes *modus operandi*, but most particularly "Diamonds Are Forever."

"The plot was that of a chap like Howard Hughes, who lived in this place and no one could reach him, until Bond finally gets into the penthouse and discovers that this type of Hughes character was being controlled by the arch villain. That came to me one night when I missed seeing Hughes. I missed him as a person and I missed him as a friend. I tried many times when I was in Las Vegas to reach him at this penthouse at the Desert Inn (a Vegas hotel that Hughes owned), but I could never get to him as far as speaking to him or seeing him. However, there were messages he would get and respond to.

"One night, I woke up in a dream. I dreamed I was climbing this building, like the Desert Inn, and got onto the roof and fell into one of the famous Howard Hughes toilets — which were famous because he had telephones, intercoms, close circuit TV. My dream brought me to this particular place, and then out of there into this huge beautiful Ken Adam (Bond production designer) set, beyond this big plate glass window, stretching across the room.

"I could see a character in the background, with his back to me. And it was unmistakably Hughes' frame. And I banged on the window, on the plate glass, and I called his name. And this figure slowly turned, and I saw his face, which was horrific. A horrific face. And it wasn't they were operating his immense empire, and obvi-

continued

ously Hughes was either captive or dead. And that was what the story 'Diamonds Are Forever' was all about."

Broccoli's dream may well prove to be prophetic. As the dispute over his multibillion-dollar estate continues, stories have emerged maintaining that in the last days Hughes in fact was the captive of his organization's inner circle. Or that Hughes' hermetically sealed exile was imposed on him, or a fiction circulated by some superpower that controlled him. That the superpower was the CIA. That Howard Hughes was the CIA. Or, like Bond in "From Russia With Love," he staged the ultimate caper: his own funeral. That Hughes, who never liked "a gun put to his head" on any decision, may or may not be dead.

The Hughes influence on Broccoli appears to be most felt in film production. For "The Spy Who Loved Me," Broccoli chose on-location shooting in Sardinia, the Bahamas, Egypt and London's Pinewood Studios and managed to convince authorities to let him use as sets several Egyptian tombs and a British secret naval base. And when Broccoli couldn't find a set large enough for the interior of the sub-snatching supertanker, with Hughesque authority, he built it. Interestingly, the resulting 386-foot-long sound stage, the largest in the world and equipped for "Spy" with near life-sized subs, is strikingly close in size to the HMB-I, the barge that accompanied Glomar on its mission and was designed to house — and hide — the Russian submarine.

The 49-foot doors of the supertanker open wide, then swallow the nuclear submarine. The British are then blaming the Soviets; the Soviets are blaming the Americans — exactly, thinks Stromberg, according to plan. He has captured Anya, the Soviet spy and Bond's ally, and is holding her, bound to a chaise, in his underwater laboratory. The situation appears hopeless: In three minutes, Stromberg informs her on his way to the control room, he is going to blow up the rest of the world; Bond, meanwhile, is nowhere to be found. The countdown begins: two minutes, one and a half, one ... Anya suddenly notices that her arms and feet are free. She looks up: "James!"

Hughes may have been only partially successful, but, at this point, it looks as though Bond is going to make it.